



Proposal for a terms of reference for intercultural integration focal points in Cyprus

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Context

The Council of Europe defines intercultural integration as the outcome of a two-way process that effectively, positively, and sustainably manages diversity within a framework of mutual and symmetrical recognition, grounded in human rights. This approach rests on four pillars:

Equality: ensuring every individual enjoys full rights and dignity;

Recognition of diversity: embracing the rich heritage of all individuals, including their origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disability;

Fostering positive interaction: where equality serves as a foundation for respectful and constructive daily encounters among people from varied backgrounds and

Active citizenship and civic participation: involving the public, including migrants, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of intercultural integration initiatives.

These principles are accompanied by the fundamental principles of social justice and respect for human rights. The process of integration and inclusion in society goes through the prevention of social inequalities, respect for human rights and the effective combating of institutional racism in the public sphere.

From 2021 to 2024, the Council of Europe's Intercultural Inclusion Unit and the European Commission's Directorate General for Structural Reform Support, in partnership with the Migration Department of the Deputy Ministry for Migration and International Protection of the Republic of Cyprus, implemented two projects aimed at [strengthening structures and policies for intercultural integration in Cyprus](#).¹

Following consultations at the national and local levels during the first joint project: "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus" a "[Blueprint for multilevel governance of intercultural integration policies in Cyprus](#)", was prepared and presented at a national event on 25 May 2023, and it proposed the establishment of a new national authority for integration. Since the creation of the new Deputy Ministry for Migration and International Protection in June 2024, it is proposed that the new national authority could take the form of a new coordination platform for integration which would be managed by the Deputy Ministry and chaired by the Deputy Minister. This platform would gather technical and academic experts, migrant and relevant civil society organisations, as well as national and local focal points.

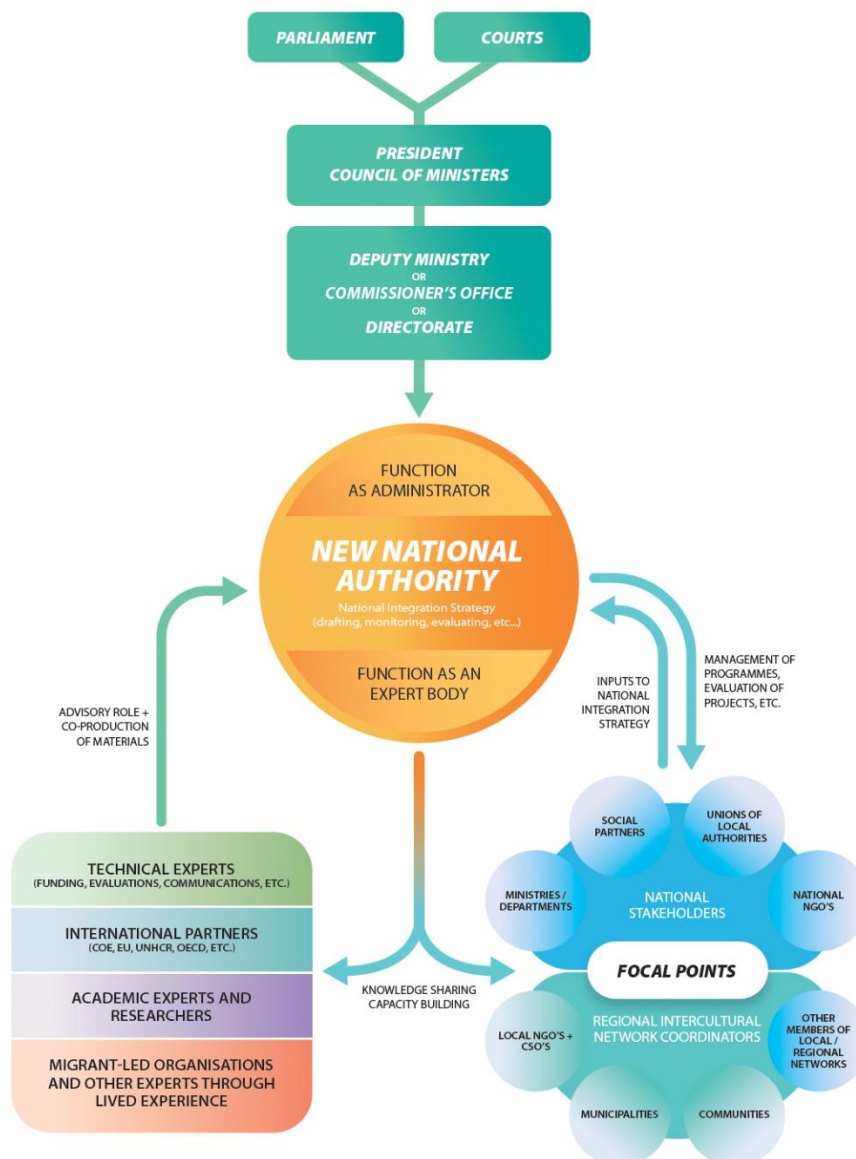
The Blueprint lays out a comprehensive framework for fostering effective intercultural integration across all levels of government. A cornerstone of this framework is the proposed creation of a network of **integration focal points**, designated as key individuals responsible for facilitating horizontal and vertical coordination.

¹ "Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus" and "Enhancing structures and policies for intercultural integration in Cyprus" projects were co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission.

The aim of this document is to propose a terms of reference for these focal points, outlining their responsibilities, qualifications, and expected contributions to the multilevel governance of intercultural integration in Cyprus.

The role of the focal points

Focal points, as described in the “Blueprint for Multilevel Governance of Intercultural Integration Policies in the Republic of Cyprus”, are key individuals designated to act as connectors within the governance framework. They are integral to multilevel and multistakeholder governance, as they bridge the gaps between national, regional, and local authorities, civil society organisations, and grassroots networks. The Blueprint identifies focal points as essential contributors to the preparation, implementation, and review of a future national integration strategy, ensuring that it is informed by insights from all levels of governance and society.



Focal points are embedded within a broader governance framework designed to promote intercultural integration. They serve as vital nodes in the multilevel system, facilitating both vertical and horizontal coordination. Regarding **vertical coordination**, focal points connect national, regional, and local levels of government, ensuring that directives and strategies flow downward effectively while insights and feedback from the ground level are communicated upward. In relation with **horizontal coordination**, they foster collaboration across government departments, civil society organizations, and stakeholders, breaking silos and encouraging cohesive action.

These focal points should operate under the guidance of the Deputy Ministry for Migration and International Protection and should be supported by **tailored training, communication materials, and financial resources**. Their inclusion will ensure that the new national integration strategy reflects the realities and needs of all governance levels and societal sectors, as well as ensuring their implementation and monitoring of those actions within their sector.

According to the Blueprint document, the primary objectives of the focal points should be:

- ⇒ **Facilitate information flow:** collect and disseminate information across their networks to ensure transparency, alignment, and informed decision-making.
- ⇒ **Support policy development and review:** contribute to the co-production, implementation, and evaluation of the national integration strategy, ensuring it is comprehensive and inclusive.
- ⇒ **Enhance stakeholder engagement:** foster meaningful collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including marginalised groups, to enrich the policymaking process.
- ⇒ **Promote best practices and innovation:** share insights and successful models across sectors and regions, ensuring consistent quality and innovation in integration practices.
- ⇒ **Strengthen local capacity:** empower regional and local actors through training, knowledge sharing, funding and capacity-building initiatives to participate in integration policies and implement integration activities effectively.



By fulfilling these roles and objectives, focal points should ensure that intercultural integration efforts in Cyprus are coherent, participatory, and responsive to both local and national priorities and the reality on the ground. They should exemplify the importance of multistakeholder engagement and should be central to the success of the Blueprint's vision for a cohesive and inclusive society.

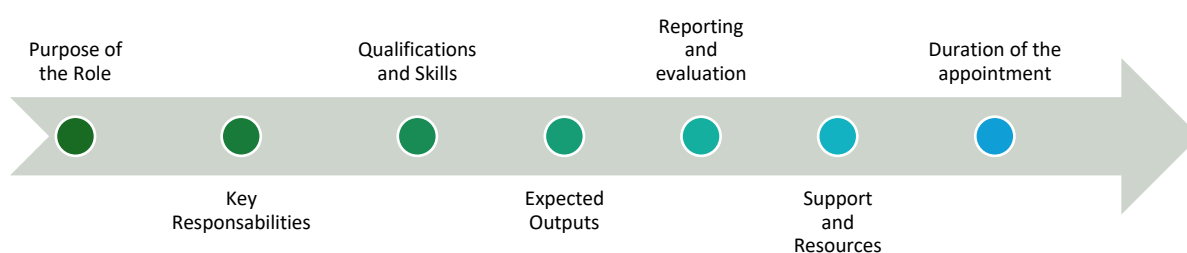
Focal points would be key individuals designated by their organisations to facilitate both horizontal and vertical coordination in implementing intercultural integration policies. They would act as connectors, ensuring effective communication and collaboration across ministries, departments, local authorities, civil society organisations, and regional networks. To do so, they would be provided with training and support to enhance their capacity for information dissemination and feedback collection.

Focal points would have an important role to play in the co-production, implementation, and review of a future national integration strategy. They would gather and provide information, ideas, and perspectives from their respective organisations, ensuring the strategy reflected diverse and practical insights. Similarly, they could be invited to participate in Regional Intercultural Networks to contribute to the development and review of regional strategies and action plans, aligning them with broader national objectives.

To ensure the effectiveness and clarity of their roles, a comprehensive terms of reference (ToR) should be developed for focal points. The document will outline their responsibilities, including attending integration platform coordination meetings, disseminating information within their sectors, and collecting and relaying insights to inform national policies. Depending on the complexity of an organisation or authority, multiple focal points could be appointed to address different thematic areas or departmental needs.

Terms of reference for focal points in the multilevel and multistakeholder governance of intercultural integration

Focal points would need to be appointed across various ministries, government bodies, public sector organisations, and civil society entities. Their roles would be guided by detailed terms of reference (ToR), which would outline their responsibilities, expected contributions, and operational framework, providing clear guidance on their duties within the coordination platform for intercultural integration. The ToR would also establish performance expectations, ensure alignment with the future national integration strategy, and support their engagement in Regional Intercultural Networks and other collaborative initiatives.



Purpose of the role

Focal points are designated representatives responsible for facilitating coordination, communication, and collaboration among national, regional, and local authorities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders involved in the intercultural integration framework of the Republic of Cyprus. Their role is essential to ensuring the effective implementation, monitoring, and review of the future national integration strategy.

Key responsibilities

Focal points serve as essential agents within the coordination platform for intercultural integration, tasked with ensuring alignment, coordination, and active engagement across various levels of government and sectors. Their responsibilities encompass a wide range of activities designed to facilitate effective communication, policy development, capacity building, and monitoring.

- **Coordination and communication:** focal points would act as the primary liaison between their respective organisation and the Deputy Ministry for Migration and International Protection. Their role would include facilitating vertical coordination with higher and lower levels of governance and horizontal coordination across departments, sectors, and organisations. They would be responsible for communicating policy developments, decisions, and strategic priorities from the Deputy Ministry to their organisation, while also providing feedback to inform broader decision-making processes.
- **Policy input and development:** focal points would play an integral role in shaping and refining the future national integration strategy. They would gather data, ideas, and

perspectives from their respective organisations to ensure the strategy is well-informed and reflective of on-the-ground realities. Additionally, they would actively participate in co-production processes, collaborating with various stakeholders to develop strategies and action plans that address the specific needs of their sector.

- **Capacity building:** focal points would identify capacity gaps within their organisations and seek to address these gaps by participating in training programs organised by the Deputy Ministry. They would also serve as conduits for knowledge transfer, disseminating best practices and insights from national and international sources within their networks to improve integration efforts.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** as part of their responsibilities, focal points would monitor the implementation of integration-related actions within their organisations, ensuring that progress aligns with strategic objectives. They would provide regular updates to the integration coordination platform on challenges, opportunities, and outcomes related to intercultural integration activities, facilitating continuous improvement and adaptation of policies.
- **Representation in regional networks:** focal points could represent their organisations in Regional Intercultural Networks, actively contributing to the development and implementation of regional action plans. Through collaboration with other focal points, they would ensure alignment and coherence between local, regional, and national strategies, enhancing the overall effectiveness of integration initiatives.
- **Collaborate with other focal points to ensure alignment between local, regional, and national strategies:** focal points could work with their counterparts to align local, regional, and national strategies, ensuring consistency and coherence while fostering a unified approach to intercultural integration.

Qualifications and skills

Focal points must possess a strong set of qualifications and skills to effectively fulfill their role in the multilevel governance of intercultural integration. These attributes ensure that they can navigate the complexities of coordination, communication, and collaboration across diverse sectors and levels of governance while contributing meaningfully to policy development and implementation.

- **Membership in public service:** focal points which represent national bodies should be members of the public service to ensure they have the necessary institutional knowledge and access to facilitate coordination effectively within their respective organisations and across governance levels (years of experience could be detailed).
- **Demonstrated knowledge or experience in intercultural integration, social cohesion, or related fields:** focal points should have a solid understanding or practical experience in areas such as intercultural integration, fostering social cohesion, or similar domains to effectively contribute to strategy development and implementation.
- **Networking and expertise in their area of specialisation:** focal points should have established networks and proven expertise in their area of specialisation, such as health, education, urban planning, or other relevant fields. This enables them to provide informed input and leverage sector-specific knowledge for integration efforts.
- **Solid communication and coordination skills:** the ability to communicate clearly and coordinate activities across multiple stakeholders is essential. Focal points must relay information efficiently, ensuring alignment and understanding among all parties involved.

- **Ability to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders:** focal points must work effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society organisations, and grassroots communities, fostering collaboration and inclusivity.
- **Analytical and problem-solving skills to provide constructive input for policy development:** Strong analytical and problem-solving skills enable focal points to assess challenges and propose practical solutions, ensuring that policies and strategies are both effective and actionable.
- **Experience with social entities and networks:** experience in working with social entities, community networks, and non-governmental organisations would be beneficial. This would enable focal points to navigate community dynamics, build trust, and foster stronger partnerships for integration initiatives.
- **Training in intercultural competences:** focal points should have training or similar qualifications in intercultural competences, equipping them to effectively navigate and address the complexities of diverse cultural interactions. This ensures they can foster understanding, inclusivity, and constructive dialogue in their work.

Note: Depending on the complexity of an organisation or authority, multiple focal points could be appointed to address different thematic areas or departmental needs. This flexibility ensures comprehensive coverage of specialised topics and enhances the effectiveness of the coordination process by allowing subject matter experts to address specific challenges within their domains, fostering streamlined communication and targeted problem-solving.

Expected outputs

The work of focal points will be vital for the successful implementation of intercultural integration policies. Their outputs ensure the alignment of efforts across governance levels, provide actionable insights for strategy refinement, and could maintain the momentum of integration initiatives. Key expected outputs include the following:

- **Contributions to the future national integration strategy:** focal points would be responsible for contributing to the development, implementation, and review of a national integration strategy. By providing data, perspectives, and recommendations, they ensure that the strategy remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to changing needs and contexts.
- **Regular reporting:** focal points are expected to produce regular reports detailing their activities and the progress made in implementing integration-related actions within their organisations. These reports will serve as essential tools for monitoring, accountability, and identifying areas that require additional support or adjustment.
- **Meeting participation:** Regular and active participation in meetings convened by the Deputy Ministry is an essential output. These engagements provide opportunities for sharing insights, addressing challenges, and fostering collaboration across sectors and governance levels.
- **Training:** focal points are expected to participate in training sessions organised by the Deputy Ministry to strengthen their skills and enhance their ability to fulfill their roles effectively. These sessions also provide updates on best practices and emerging trends in intercultural integration.
- **Identifying good practices:** focal points play a key role in identifying successful initiatives and good practices within their organisations or regions, or even through

international partners. These insights are important for scaling up effective models and integrating innovative approaches into broader policies and strategies.

- **Facilitating knowledge dissemination:** focal points will facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and best practices within their organisations, ensuring that lessons learned, and successful approaches are effectively applied in daily operations. They may also support capacity building within their teams to align with integration objectives.
- **Participation in dissemination events:** focal points are expected to engage in dissemination events, such as conferences or public forums, to share achievements, insights, and lessons from integration efforts. These events help raise awareness and build momentum for intercultural integration policies and practices.
- **Identifying/proposing - pilot projects:** focal points may identify and propose pilot projects or innovative initiatives to advance the objectives of the future national integration strategy. Successful pilots can serve as models for broader implementation and contribute to the continuous improvement of integration efforts.

Reporting and evaluation

Focal points will report directly to their respective organisational leadership while maintaining close communication with the Deputy Ministry and other participants in the coordination platform for integration.

They are required to attend regular meetings convened by the Deputy Ministry, where they provide updates on their activities, share insights, and discuss progress on their responsibilities. These meetings serve as a platform for collaboration and continuous improvement in their roles.

The performance of focal points will be evaluated periodically to assess their effectiveness in fulfilling key responsibilities such as coordination, policy input, capacity building, and reporting. These evaluations ensure accountability and highlight areas for further development.

Feedback from the Deputy Ministry and other stakeholders will be an integral part of the evaluation process. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the focal points' impact and helps refine their contributions to the intercultural integration framework.

Support and resources

Focal points will receive training, access to communication tools, and financial support for their activities, provided through the Deputy Ministry's. Communication materials, such as brochures and infographics, will be supplied to assist in disseminating information and collecting feedback.

Duration of appointment

Focal points are appointed for a period aligned with the implementation cycle of the national integration strategy, subject to renewal based on performance and organisational needs.

This terms of reference aims to serve as a guiding framework to ensure that focal points effectively fulfil their roles in the multilevel governance of intercultural integration policies.

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